

# Paedagogus Hungaricus Denomination of Teachers in Hungary and Eastern Europe in the XXth Century

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**Abstract** The Hungarian word “pedagógus” means people who work as professional teachers in the educational system. Meanwhile the word “paedagogus” is a common European heritage, which is quite a unique lingual phenomenon. The *paidagogos-paedagogus* – across the Hellenistic culture, the Biblical use of the word, the language of the patristic age and the later theological and spiritual literature – becomes an abstraction without reference to the word of schools. The modern Indo-European languages consistently use other classical expressions (*précepteur, professeur, maître* etc.), or some own original words (*teacher, Lehrer* etc.). Though the Hungarian language has its original word covering the idea of “teacher” (*tanító*); this word is getting to mean in the course of classification of professional education (by ages of pupils and types of schools) teacher, namely the one, who teaches in a secondary grammar school. Its original role has been taken over by the classical “paedagogus” (*pedagógus*), instead of other original Hungarian possibilities thanks to a political-historical coincidence. It is surprisingly not a direct classical heritage, but an expression used by the communist party of the new-born Soviet Union, and it was spread by the local communist parties during the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe after the World War II.

**Keywords** Greek Education, Roman Education, Paidagogos, Paedagogus, Nomenclature of Teachers, Hungarian Education, Soviet Union

as a kind of socio-pedagogue. They are *paedagogos*[2] in Danish.

The western Slavic languages have also a generalized “paedagogus” expression in line with the ones similar to Russian *utschitel*. These are used in the official languages for historical-political reasons, similar to Hungary.

The Hungarian version[3] of the OECD CERI[4] publication *Teachers matter*, which explores the international world of people affected by educational work. There is a linguistic problem which has been occupying for a long time the concerned researchers. They consider using the mirror-translation of English *teacher* (it exists in Hungarian – *tanár* -, but only expressing the teachers at ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 level) instead of the *pedagógus*.

This lexical question has already been mentioned in the *Pedagogical Dictionary in Eleven Languages*, published by F. Arato, in 1982, Budapest. The Hungarian *tanító* (ISCED 1) and *tanár* (see above) correspond there to their exact parallels in other languages, but the identification of Hungarian *pedagógus* as a German *Erzieher* or English *educator* is very doubtful. The *Hungarian Pedagogical Lexicon*[5] mentions the problem as well, referring to the historical fact: the word *pedagógus* has been used from 1945, instead of the former *nevelő* (educator).

Not really clear about what kind of process leading from the classical heritage to the use of *pedagógus* as a specialist in education; what more, to a special Hungarian or Eastern European use. The next question: How has the meaning of *pedagógus* covered all the person related to the very different aspects of education?

## 1. Introduction

*Paedagogus*[1]. The general use of this expression for professional teachers is a unique Hungarian, or an Eastern European phenomenon; Meanwhile the word comes from our common historical legacy. In the western civilization there is a parallel use only in Denmark, where 3-5 years in MA degree trained educators are called so, who get a degree

## 2. Method

We examine the development of ancient Greek word “paidagogos”: its original role in the basic sources, the change of its meaning in Rome, first of all in time of appearance of Christianity, after the middle ages and renaissance. The use of paidagogos-paedagogus expression and expressions that have changed it can be found in the modern European languages including Hungarian,. This

investigation uses the results of etymology and the dictionaries describing the actual use of different languages. Based on original sources we can review how known historical texts treat the word of education and the person of teacher, the modern theoretical works on education, from the XVIII-XXth centuries, and the use of legal and official language in acts and office texts.

### 3. Results

Our problem seems to be a special Hungarian linguistic phenomenon. After this research we can conclude a regional, and not only linguistic, but a historical result. The use of expression *paedagogus* (with different national spelling, pronunciation and letters) in Eastern Europe does not come from the well-known classical heritage, but is a result of impact form the political history of the XXth century.

### 4. The Origins of the Expression *Paidagogos*

The origin of our terminus *technicus paedagogus* from the ancient greek *paidagogos* (child-leader slave) is a commonplace. It is worth to mention that our slave-idea is usually misleading. The *paidagogos* in the Greek antiquity is not a part of a mass building for example pyramids, but a part of the family, who has to lead children to the school, and to protect them both physically and mentally[6]. He has to deal with all the children in the family, including even girls, who does not frequent schools[7]. He takes over the duies of nurses. He is *expressis verbis* partner and complementer of the parental education, not only outdoors, but also at home. He has a strong control over children, with even facility of corporal punishment, because he is responsible for any “incorrectness” of children[8]. This supervision and responsibility do not end at the end of child-age, they hold up to the ritual initiation to adulthood – maybe later arranging an older slave for the young[9]. According to the Greek tragedies, which look into the depth of former family life, the *paidagogos* own the prestige in the family even across the borders of his own tasks[10].

The *paidagogos* – although his role is also to check the homework, or to help learning - is clearly and exactly differentiated from the teachers by both of the main classical cultures, either by Romans (*praceptor, magister*), or by Greeks (*didascalos*). However the original meaning of this word approaches our broadest and most positive ideas of professional educator, instead of a slave.

In Rome, a slave, born at home, was from the outset in a special status, in particular one born from a freeman father (and a slave mother working around the house),was mainly from the lord of house, himself. He was taught in every case to read and write, and he accompanied the children to the school (*pedisequi*) [11]. Romans got to know the Greek word around the 3rd century BC. *Paidagogos'* of Greek

origin appeared from the third Macedonian war, 168 BC. After the immigration of a huge mass of Greek slaves, the original Latin word *pedisequus* was entirely changed to *paidagogos*, although they were used side by side for a long time. The role of *paedagogi* (already by the Latin ortography) had gone beyond escorting and serving children for the first time, similarly that of their Greek predecessors. What is more,there was another Roman word blending into *paedagogus*. It was the *educator/educatrix*, which meant originally foster parent of waifs and strays, and its meaningchaneged later a lot.

The connection of the Roman *paedagogus* and teaching appeared in the independent possibility of work for the disenslaved persons. It was mainly a kind of official job, but also *paedagogiums* were founded in Rome. *Paedagogium* was not a standard school, but a training place, where the former *paedagogi*, already as free and well educated teachers completed the school-teaching of youngsters, first of all with different practical skills, as for agriculture or book-editing, translation etc., as needed[12].

In the age of hellenism, 4-3 century BC. The concept of *paideia* that meant formerly “caring for children, education”, was born to a new life. The huge empires emerged after the conquests of Alexander the Great, and lived in the successor states, and Rome made an end once for all for the world of classical polis. The smaller, close communities of polis (as well as of the early Rome), with their own values, cults, dialects and traditions ceased. The *paideia* changed from the educational tradition of each community to the expression of all the human culture – as we better know *encyclo-paideia* or in latin: *encyclopaedia*. After-ages are wrong, when they translated this *encyclopaedia* as a kind of fully comprehensive education, because the Greek original meaning express just the basic education with introductory elements. Nevertheless the concept of a former “babysitter” slave has grown much richer. This process of abstraction and the role of *paedagogus* clearly separated from the school was put to use then by the Christian culture. The previous one appears in the New Testament, in the letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians (3.24-25.): “*So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian*” The ‘guardian’ is in the original text *paidagogos*, as well, as the in later Latin translations, or patristic commentaries on this locus[13]. The negative mirror of this abstract use is, when Tertullian[14] supposed a “dark *paedagogus*” in the childhood of Socrates. The Christian tradition knows and uses at the same time the concrete child-caring role as well. Clemens of Alexandria treats it in his work “*Paidagogos Christianos*” (2. century AD.) as educator responsible for the religious education, of course out of official schools. An educator who knows well the secular literacy and the Christian faith as well. Saint Jerome[15] made him an example for the perfection in philosophy.

## 5. Adnomination of Teachers in Christian and Modern Europe

Thus the Christian culture of first centuries AD. used activly both abstract and concrete meanings of *paedagogus*. On the other hand the authors served the secular Latin words on professional schoolmen. Saint Augustin wrote his tractat *De Magistro* ("On the teacher"). Cassiodorus, who later defined the standard curriculum of the middle ages, unifying the classical and christian elements of literacy, used consequently *magister*. The Latin Europe of the middle ages accordingly terms teachers *magister* and *praeceptor*. The word *paedagogus* almost entirely disappeared from treating the life of schools, but the phrase *paedagogus christianus* was used in spiritual education. Its last heyday was one of the most popular print of Europe of its own time, the book of Philippe d'Outreman valencian jesuit, written in 1629 and edited more than sixty times, with the same title. *Paedagogus* appears in the daily life of schools in only one more short period during the late renaissance. Sebald Heyden, who described most widely the word usage of school from 16th century to the end of schooling in Latin did not use this word[16], and Erasmus and Comenius took *praeceptor* in practical use of language – both of them used the *paedagogus* for a short time as the synonime, perhaps just displaying their classical erudition. The narrator of Erasmus' collection of dialogues *Colloquia familiaria* is a person called *paedagogus*, but in the dialogues themselves, where pupils discoursed with their educators, he got back to the *praeceptor* and *magister*. This interesting contradiction was solved by Erasmus in his *The Praise of Folly*[17], where he identified *paedagogus* as a person responsible for education "in a general way" – according to the Christian tradition. All the oeuvre of Comenius representing the school terminology of his age calls teachers *praeceptor*. In his *Ianuae Linguae Latinae Vestibulum*[18] encyclopedia of the use of language in schools in early modern Europe mentions the paedagogus as a synonym of the well defined *praeceptor*, *magister* and *rector*[19], but its meaning (*paedagogus adverit et urget* – "admonishes and exhorts") suggested to be out of use. This slow death of the word broaches, whether the modern use of "pedagogue" is in any relation with the classical (secular or Christian, Greek or Roman) expression.

In the English language this idea is exactly expressed by "teacher", both nowadays and from a historical point of view. None of its fifteen-sixteen living synonyms come from or is related to *paedagogus*. This word is different either from the word-family of *paedagogus* or the latin expressions of the middle ages mentionned below, but it is from the same ancient IndoEuropean root \**deik-*, \**dik-*. This root means "shows", and its oldest derivative is the Greek *deiknymi*, but more known is the Latin *dico 3* and *dico 1*, surviving in "dictation", "praedication", and in several verbs of romance languages expressing "telling" or "explicating". The word developed from the original Indo-european root across the old and middle high German

to the modern German *zeigen* (with the same meaning), and across the old English *teacan* and middle English *techen* to the modern *teach*, that took its recent meaning from the 9th century as a verb, and from the 13th century as a noun. The *pedagogue* form related to the *paedagogus* is known as an English word, but in its original meaning was used only by the renaissance imitating classics from the end of the 15th century, and in its "modern" meaning (person involved in theory of education) was used also mostly from the end of 14th century to the end of 17th century[20].

As to *pedagogy* as an abstract noun, it does not spread at all as the heritage of any classical language, but from writings of the literate reformer Jean Calvin[21], edited in French, German and English. Its meaning concerns the theory of education and the practice as well, but its use has been short and narrow, until the 17th century. Its special derivate meaning is the place of teaching, according to the ancient *paedagogium* occurred from the 17th century to the 19th century[22].

The spoken French does not use the word *pédagogue* coming from *paedagogus* as a teaching person, not even as synonym[23]. Its latest active use can be detected in the 14th century, rather in a special sense (either pejorative or laudative). From that time the *professeur* dominates, suited by *maître* and *précepteur* (from the Latin *magister* and *praeceptor*) mainly in belles-lettres of the 19-20th centuries. The word *pédagogie*, is squarely related to the theory of education, as in every western romance languages. The use of French *professeur* is the very same as the English *teacher*.

There is a similarly deep parallel between the English *teacher* and the German *Lehrer*[24] that has been used from its middle high German appearance in the 8th century (*leren*), trough the first German translations of the Bible and writings of Goethe with the same meaning, expressing teachers in all grades of education. *Pädagog* similar to French *pédagogue* appeared in German speaking regions in the 16th century, but its use turned out in the 18th century. *Pädagoge* is a modern living synonym of *Lehrer*, but its meaning (along with that of the abstract noun *Pädagogie*) has been absolutely shifted to the theoretical researcher of education.

## 6. Expression of Teacher in the Hungarian Language

The Hungarian language is a fundamentally extraordinary one in Europe. With the Finnish and Estonian, they are the three non indo-european, namely uralic or finno-ugrian languages in the continent. Hungarian *tanít* and words composed from it are from the most ancient, so called Uralic layer of this language[25]. The root \**tun-* takes its place in the semantic field of "divinator, foreteller, sorcerer" in contemporary uralic languages. But the original meaning of the verb approaches to "imitate" as well. Its reflexive and causative form (*tanul, tanít*) appears in the old

Hungarian language in the 14th century with this meaning, and as a noun (*tanító* – “who makes sbt imitate”) in the 15th century *Jókai-codex*[26]. Its use has been uninterrupted from that time: *tanító* is who teaches. The neologism of 19th century derived the root of *tanító* and composed different new variants, for example from 1833 the word *tanár*; current but not exact parallel of *teacher*. The Fogarasi Dictionary explained the word as *doctor* working at a university, but the *A magyar nyelvűjítás szótára* (Dictionary of the Hungarian Neologies) in 1836 expanded the meaning: “person teaching in primary or secondary level, Gimnasial- und Hochschullehrer, Professor” [27]. The Czuczor-Fogarasi Dictionary wrote on *tanító*: “he is, who teaches in primary school. Others, called formerly professors, are *tanárs*.” This hardly appreciable difference has been existing in Hungarian language for almost two hundred years. *Tanító* teaches in primary school, *tanár* in the secondary school – from the point of historical linguistic the very same words from the same root, with similar affixes – but in two “cast” of educational system.

We know the use of word *paedagogus* in Hungary from 1537. Its Hungarian use and orthography in the 18-19th centuries was already criticized as a *germanism*[28]. Older texts written in Latin used the well known *magister-preceptor-doctor* expressions of the European middle ages. The Hungarian words of similar meaning, mentioned above, can be referred to these ones. A fragment of a school-dictionary from Gyöngyös[29] uses the *tanító-magister* parallel for teacher. Szenczi-Molnár Albert’s Latin Dictionary in 1608 connected them to preceptor too. (We have to mention, he defined Latin word *paedagogus* the same way). The Latin dictionary of Pápai-Páriz Ferenc was very popular and edited and revised several times follows precisely his predecessor. The last representative Latin dictionary of the general use of Latin at schools *Lexicon Latino-Germanico-Hungaricum* of Márton József (Wien; 1818) approached to latin as to a dead language, and got out the original ancient words and meaning. It reviewed the *paedagogus* too, but in its original meaning: slave caring children.

## 7. The Return of Paedagogus in the Modern Hungarian Language

The first modern general lexicon “*Pallas*” in 1896. defines *paedagogus* (with Hungarian orthography *pedagógus*) concisely as “who cares children, educator” but the next one, *Révai nagylexikon* in 1922 completed the meaning: “nowadays: *tanító, nevelő, tanár* (teacher in primary school, teacher in secondary school, educator), and person who researches theory of education”. Balassa József in his dictionary *A magyar nyelv szótára* (1940) defined *pedagógus* as a Roman slave, and as a *tanító* (teacher firstly in primary school) As if the word *pedagógus* could solve the problem of many different expression for different level and field of education and educators, identifying them in

one word.

On the other hand the official and legal use of language tried to avoid *pedagógus*, as a foreign word. From the Act XIX. 1848 as late as the Act XX. 1940 *tanító* and *tanár* were used detachedly for teacher in primary school and teacher in secondary school. From 1949 an act defined the new institute “pedagogical gymnasium” that takes up of nurses and primary teachers, and “pedagogical high school” for training of secondary teachers, but the official language kept away to use *pedagógus* for all of them. At the same time the Ministry of Education treated in its proposal on the training of *tanárs* (for all the levels of education) and the above mentioned “pedagogical high school” was changed in 1959 to a ” high school for training of *tanárs*”. A turn in this field was brought by the Act on Education 1961, that felt the very need of a complex expression for all the teaching persons, and applied the *oktató*, a practically unused word, that expresses very circumstantially persons, who teach.

But at the same time, the New Hungarian Lexicon representing the real and practical use of languages in 1962 used the *pedagógus* for the same meaning, and the first modern dictionaries of the Hungarian language edited by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1972, and 1978 gave us as first meaning of *pedagógus*: person who teaches, and as second one: person in relation to educational research, but in 2001 there was only one meaning, the first one. The Hungarian Pedagogical Lexicon in 1978 showed the same use in its title, and in the different related entries as well. Lastly, the Act on Education 1985 Was the first legal document that fixed the meaning of *pedagógus* as an expression of all persons, who teach at any level of public education. This use had been applied since that time in both of educational acts (1993 and 2011) and related legal texts.

We can cast a glance at one more particular use of language as well. This is the modern professional pedagogical literature. Ágost Lubrich in his *Általános neveléstan* (*General Theory of Education*) [30] used consequently the *nevelő-nevelés-növendék* (*educator, educated, education*). Lajos Felméri[31], Mór Kármán[32] and István Schneller[33] apply approximately in fifty percent the *paedagogus* or the *nevelő* (*educator*). Ödön Weszely used *pedagógus* as a theoretical expert, the *nevelő* in general[34], like later Gyula Mitrovics[35] and Sándor Karácsony huge pedagogical oeuvre in the 1930-40s years. *Neveléstan* (*Theory of Education*) of Sándor Imre[36] in his introduction treated the problem of the variants of expressions. Ernő Fináczky in his *Didaktika*[37] and Lajos Prohászka’s university textbook in 1937[38] moved back to the official *tanító-tanár* pair of words. Two significant paper of László Nagy[39], that shows the whole organisation of education, used first the *pedagógus*, and then - feeling the incertitude of expressions – created some more official paraphrases for teachers[40]. We can detect finally the efforts for searching and using a general expression for teaching, and for teachers, but accordingly the pedagogical literature of the forst half of 20th century the *nevelés* and the *nevelő* (*education, aducator*) seems the

most matching ones in the Hungarian language. What happened in Hungary after 1945, leading to the general use of *pedagógus*, to a disused and mainly forgotten classical word, instead of its potential Hungarian parallel (and what happened in Eastern Europe, where we can find the same story of the word in the same era)?

In 1945, at the end of the 2nd World War the use of Hungarian *nevelő* became the appropriate expression of people who teach at each level of education. It was used by researchers, by political parties, and – as far as we can reconstruct it – by the spoken language as well[41]. We find it also in the papers written by the minister responsible for the education, Géza Teleki[42]. But in 1945 with a meager national tradition but following a strong Soviet example was founded the *Pedagógusok Szakszervezete* (Trade Union for Teachers – called *pedagógus!*), that persisted in his every single publications and brochures to the use of this international word. In the Hungarian branch of the Soviet Communist Party, the Hungarian Party of Workers (former Illegal Communist Party) was bred a *pedagógus-group*, and a *pedagógus leader group*, and while the state – as we have seen before – adhered to using the traditional Hungarian words expressing teachers, the communist party followed the soviet pattern *pedagógus* until the main educational document of the party in 1972. Behind the scenes the pressure of communist party won the controversy of course, since the actual leadership of apparatus was in its hands from the early 1950s. The everyday use of the classical word came from this effort as well. First of all the journals and newspapers informing the teachers propagated the use of language preferred by the trade union and by the communist party. But what reason?

All these events are interesting especially as the Russian common language has used the word *utschitel* for teachers of all levels to this day. So we cannot suppose a kind of general Russian (Soviet) linguistic impact. Even the main pedagogical textbook representing the total mental dictatorship of the Soviet-era, written by Dr. Kairov[43] uses *utschitel*, in Hungarian translation *tanító* for the teachers.

## 8. Conclusions

The strange general reuse of *paedagogus* and *paedagogia* appeared in the first half of century in official language of the Soviet Communist Party and in the sphere of education led by Nadezhda Krupskaia, wife of Vladimir Lenin, of the Soviet administration. [44]. These Two classical and quite professional-seemed expression perhaps are a compensation of a professional incompetency. Impact of this linguistic and lexicographic tendency can be detected in all the former states of Soviet occupation; but in Hungary, the words *pedagógus* and *pedagógia* got a special role because of a gap in the colloquial and academic language. The name of teachers ,from different levels and institutes, called in different ways in Hungarian language could become *nevelő*

(*educator*) at the middle of the 20th century, but *pedagógus*, this word with so rich cultural heritage overbore it - surprisingly with the help of the communist Soviet Union.

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